

Events | Campgrounds | Attractions | Activities

SAYLORVILLE LAKE

Area Recreation Guide

FREE!
TAKE ONE

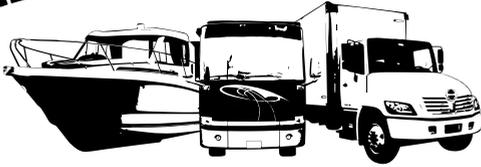
2026

Photo courtesy of Saylorville Lake Marina

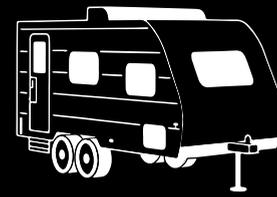
COMPLETE MAPS

-  Saylorville
-  Big Creek
-  Jester Park

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515-223-6111

Welcome to SAYLORVILLE LAKE



Come and explore the treasures of Saylorville Lake and rejuvenate your spirit!

Saylorville Lake

PAGE 4

Big Creek Recreation Area

PAGE 14

Jester Park

PAGE 18

Recreation area maps

PAGE 24

Imagine captaining a sailing vessel on Saylorville Lake, reeling in the “big one” at Big Creek State Park, or hiking the trails surrounding the nature center at Jester Park. Golfing, camping, picnicking, paddling, shooting, birding, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, biking... all are possible in northwest Polk County. Jester Park, Big Creek State Park and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Saylorville Lake anchor a premier “Outdoor Family Zone” that brings federal, state, county, local and private partners together to create a magnificent destination for Iowans and beyond.

More than 800 campsites are available during the spring, summer and fall recreation season. More than 40 picnic shelters of various sizes can accommodate groups from 20 to 500 people. Numerous boat ramps provide access to 6,000 acres of water on Saylorville Lake and 950 acres at Big Creek State Park for both motorized and non-motorized watercraft. More than 50 miles of paved and natural surface trails accommodate a wide range of use including biking, hiking and equestrian activities. Saylorville Lake is also listed as a global bio-preserve and significant bird area for waterfowl that use the lake during their spring and fall migrations.

Spend the day or the weekend enjoying all that we have to offer.



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Saylorville Lake

Facility Schedule 2025 Recreation Season Saylorville Lake

CAMPGROUNDS	Number of Reservable Sites	Dates of Full Service	Site Fee with Electric	Site Fee Non-Electric	Fee Booth Telephone #'s
Cherry Glen	121	15 April — 15 Oct.	\$24-\$26	N/A	515-964-8792
Bob Shetler	61	1 May — 15 Oct.	\$22-\$26	N/A	515-276-0873
Acorn Valley*	81	1 May — 15 Oct.	\$14-\$26	\$14 (tents only)	515-276-0429
Prairie Flower	234	1 May — 25 Oct.	\$22-\$26	N/A	515-984-6925

FEE BOOTH HOURS: Monday-Thursday, 2-6 p.m., Friday-Saturday 9-11 a.m., 3-7 p.m., Sunday 9-11 a.m., 2-6 p.m.

CHECK-OUT: Noon **CHECK-IN:** 2 p.m.

CAMPING FEES: Check Recreation.gov for exact campsite pricing. Persons with America the Beautiful (ATB) Senior or Access Pass-es are entitled to 50% discount on camping & FREE day use at all USACE beaches & boat ramps. Discount is NOT valid on group camping or shelter reservation fees.

PASSES: USACE Annual & ATB passes can be purchased at the Administration office or Visitor Center. Receipt vouchers can be purchased at all boat ramp kiosks & redeemed for the USACE Annual Passes at designated locations within 7 days. Campgrounds DO NOT sell or distribute passes of any kind.

RESERVATION: Recreation One Stop, R1S, will allow you to make individual & group camping reservations for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Forest Service & National Park Service sites by calling one, nationwide, toll free number: 877-444-6777. To find out more about R1S or to make your reservations on line, download the recreation.gov app, or visit the web site www.recreation.gov

*One youth group site is available for reservation at Acorn Valley Campground.

PHONE #'s

Administration Office:
515-276-4656

Visitor Center:
515-964-0672

R1S Camping &

Shelter Reservations:
877-444-6777

ONLINE:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/SaylorvilleLake.aspx>

 www.facebook.com/SaylorvilleLake



PICNIC AREAS	Number of Shelters	Special Use Fee w/Reservation	Dates of Availability
Bob Shetler*	2	\$50/Shelter	15 April — 11 Oct.
Cherry Glen*	6	\$50/Shelter	15 April — 11 Oct.
Cottonwood*	9	\$50/Shelter	15 April — 11 Oct.
Oak Grove	2	\$50/Shelter	23 May — 7 Sept.
Walnut Ridge*^	3	\$50/Shelter	15 April — 11 Oct.
Sandpiper*	1	\$110/Shelter	1 May — 11 Oct.
Lakeview*	1	\$75/Shelter	15 April — 11 Oct.

All shelters are available on a first come basis for free, when not reserved.

All picnic areas open 7 a.m. - 9 p.m., in May through Labor Day.

*Open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. in April and the day after Labor Day through October

^Eighteen-hole disc golf course located at Walnut Ridge

VISITOR CENTER

Dates	Days	Hours of Service
1 April — 22 May	Daily	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
23 May — 7 Sept.	Daily	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
8 Sept. — 15 Oct.	Daily	11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
16 Oct. — 31 March	Friday	10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

BEACHES

Open Dates

Oak Grove 23 May — 7 Sept.
Open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Beach fee is \$5 per private vehicle. Children under 16 are free. Purchase a \$40 Annual Pass for unlimited nationwide use. Senior, Access and Military Passes allow pass holders to utilize day use areas free of charge.

BOAT RAMPS

Lakeview and Cherry Glen are open all year (limited road maintenance); Sandpiper is open March through November. Day Use Fees are charged April through September, \$5/day or purchase a \$40 Annual Pass good for unlimited, nationwide use. Cherry Glen is closed 10 p.m. - 6 a.m. April 15 - Oct. 15.

Saylorville Lake

5600 N.W. 78th Ave.
Johnston, IA 50131-1941

Rangers balance safety and stewardship in hazard tree removal

Visitor safety is a top priority for USACE park rangers across the country. Protecting visitors from falling trees while maintaining the ecological integrity of public lands is just one of the many ways rangers help to support public safety. Hazard trees — those weakened by disease, age, or structural instability — pose a significant risk in high-use areas such as campgrounds, picnic sites and trail corridors. Their removal is necessary, but the process is far more complex than simply cutting them down.

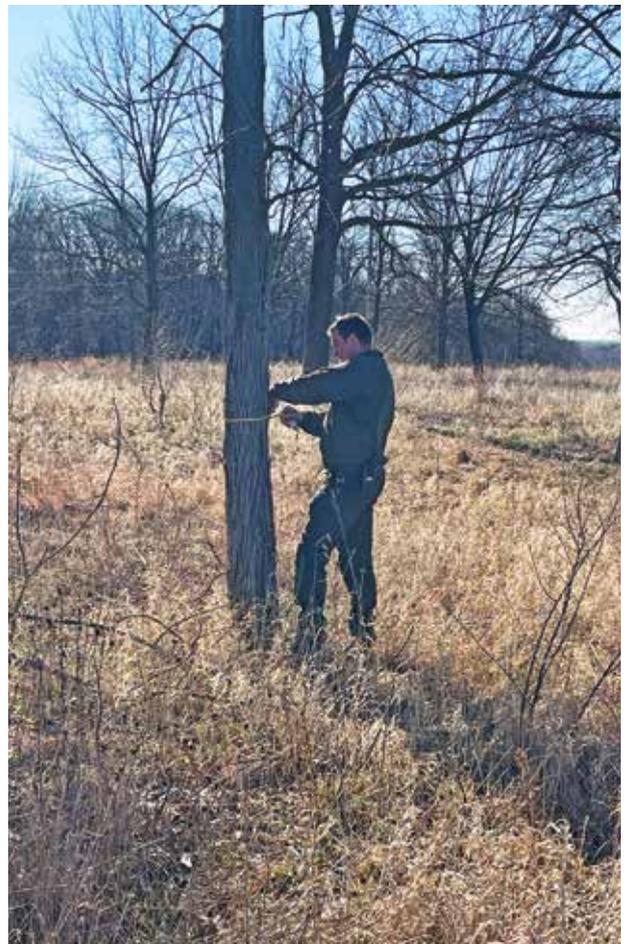
Before any tree is removed, rangers must conduct systematic inspections. Certified personnel evaluate structural defects, root stability, crown condition and signs of fungal decay or insect infestation. These assessments ensure that only trees presenting a genuine hazard are targeted, minimizing unnecessary disturbance to the forest.

Once a hazard tree is identified, removal is carefully planned. Rangers employ chainsaws, rigging systems and, in some cases, heavy equipment to safely dismantle the tree. Operations are scheduled during low visitor use periods to reduce risk. Safety zones are established and marked for visibility and crews follow strict protocols to prevent collateral damage to surrounding vegetation and infrastructure.

Rather than discarding the felled timber, Saylorville Lake channels it into their firewood program. This practice provides campers and other users with a sustainable source of wood, reduces the need for external harvesting and ensures that the material continues to serve recreational purposes. By repurposing hazard trees, parks close the loop between safety management and visitor benefit.

Tree removal is not the end of the story. Following hazard mitigation, rangers initiate replanting projects to restore canopy cover and maintain biodiversity. Native species are prioritized to support wildlife habitat and ensure long-term forest resilience. These reforestation efforts offset the ecological impact of removals and demonstrate a commitment to sustainable land management.

Hazard tree removal exemplifies the dual mission of park rangers: safeguarding visitors while stewarding natural resources. By combining technical forestry practices with community-oriented programs like firewood distribution and replanting, Saylorville achieves a balance between immediate safety needs and long-term ecological health.



Walnut Ridge Disc Golf Course leveling up with improvements



Walnut Ridge Disc Golf Course, located on the west side of Saylorville Lake, has undergone some significant upgrades this past year that are enhancing its reputation as one of Iowa's premier disc golf destinations.

New baskets have been installed across the course, giving players more consistent targets and enhanced overall play experience. Trails have been resurfaced, making it easier for disc golfers to navigate between holes and a new practice basket was added near the start of the course to give players a chance to warm up before their rounds. Tree work was also completed, improving visibility and flow while maintaining the wooded character that makes Walnut Ridge unique. In addition, one of the course's shelters is being completely redone, offering a refreshed space for gatherings and shade during tournaments and casual play.

Future projects are also in the works. Plans include new tee pads and updated course signage, both of which will help modernize the layout and make it more accessible for all skill levels.

Much of this progress is thanks to the efforts of the Des Moines Metro Disc Golf Club, whose members regularly volunteer time and labor to help maintain and upgrade Walnut Ridge. Their partnership with the park rangers at Saylorville Lake ensures the course remains not only playable but welcoming to the growing disc golf community in central Iowa.

Walnut Ridge is also a destination for competitive play. Each year, tournaments draw disc golfers from across the country, putting Johnston on the map as a hub for the sport. With the latest upgrades and more improvements on the horizon, Walnut Ridge continues to strengthen its reputation as a must-play course in the Midwest.



Stop the spread of Zebra Mussels



Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) may be small, but their impact is enormous. These invasive shellfish attach to boats, docks and equipment, clog water systems, damage engines and crowd out native species. Once they arrive in a lake or river, they multiply quickly and are nearly impossible to remove.

The good news? Every boater can help prevent their spread. Zebra mussels often “hitchhike” on boats, trailers and gear, moving from one body of water to another. By taking a few simple steps after each outing, you protect local waters, avoid costly repairs and preserve recreation areas for future generations.



Clean, Drain, Dry

Before leaving the water, always:

Clean: Remove mud, plants and mussels from boats, trailers and gear.

Drain: Empty bilges, live wells, motors and any place water collects.

Dry: Allow boats and equipment to dry completely before visiting another lake or river.

Dispose properly: Never dump bait or water into a new body of water.

Inspect often: Check your boat hull, anchor and gear for hidden hitchhikers



discover yourself

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Volunteering with us: A fulfilling experience

Do you enjoy the outdoors? Are you craving a sense of community and desire to connect with the people and world around you? Consider volunteering at Saylorville Lake!

The volunteers at Saylorville Lake experience a unique and rewarding opportunity to connect with nature, foster a sense of community and contribute to the stewardship of our outdoor spaces. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Saylorville Lake Project, relies on the dedication of our volunteers to help maintain, enhance and create memorable experiences for visitors. Volunteers also have access to quality outdoor recreation while assisting in the preservation and protection of our natural resources for the future.

Campgrounds and recreation areas often serve as hubs that help to build a sense of community among outdoor enthusiasts of all different backgrounds. Volunteers have an opportunity to engage with the public, staff and fellow volunteers.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

Full-time volunteers are required to “work” 21 hours per week and there are many options to choose from. We offer a wide range of duties including fee booth attending, mowing, campground hosting, custodial duties and more. In exchange for this service, volunteers receive a full-hookup campsite in a corresponding campground or “Volunteer Village.” Other perks include special gatherings with staff and fellow volunteers, the ability to gain lifelong friends at the parks and the gratification of knowing you’ve become a good steward of the land.

SCAN HERE
TO FIND
OUT MORE



Becoming a volunteer at Saylorville Lake is a fulfilling experience that goes beyond routine tasks. It is an opportunity to immerse oneself in the beauty of nature, connect with a vibrant community and make a lasting impact on the environment.

Volunteers will be provided the following benefits:

- Full-hookup campsites
- Uniforms and safety shoes
- Gatherings with staff and fellow volunteers
- Free rental of a reservable shelter for family or social gathering



Practice water safety this summer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Saylorville Lake urges visitors to consider the importance of practicing safe and thoughtful behaviors in, on and around open water. Tragically, people lose their lives at USACE-managed areas every year and Saylorville Lake is no exception. Most of these fatalities are water-related and the public's help is crucial in reducing these incidents. People of all ages are strongly encouraged to practice water safety this summer. Before entering or spending time near open water at Saylorville Lake, keep the following tips in mind — they could save your life or the life of someone you care about.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Accidents can happen in an instant, so always be prepared. Stay aware of your surroundings, including water conditions and wear a life jacket at all times. While boating, use the engine cutoff device to stop the engine in an emergency. Be mindful of cold-water temperatures; falling or jumping into cold water can be a shocking experience for your body and lead to dangerous consequences.

WEAR A LIFE JACKET

A life jacket can provide critical time for rescue and greatly increases your chance of survival in the event of an unexpected fall into the water. It's also vital if you become exhausted while swimming or if you are caught in a current. Statistics show that many drownings could have been prevented if a life jacket had been worn. Saylorville Lake offers free life jackets to borrow through the Life Jacket Loaner Station program, which can be found at any boat ramp on the project. Remember: Life Jackets Worn, Nobody Mourns.

KNOW YOUR SWIMMING ABILITIES

Swimming in open water is different from swimming in a pool. It's never too late to take swimming lessons to improve your skills. Every year, people drown while attempting to retrieve items from the water, such as boats, hats or toys. Let these items go; they are not worth risking your life.

ALCOHOL AND WATER DON'T MIX

Alcohol affects the inner ear, which can cause disorientation when submerged in water. If you jump or fall in, you may become confused and swim in the wrong direction — down instead of up to safety. Also be aware of "boater's



hypnosis," which is a condition caused by the combination of sun, wind, noise, vibration and motion, experienced during a day of boating. These effects can slow your reaction time, making it similar to being legally intoxicated. Adding alcohol to this condition can significantly intensify the effects.

BE AWARE OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless toxic gas that is produced when carbon-based fuels, like gasoline, are burned. It can be deadly, even on open motorboats. Carbon monoxide poisoning can occur while you are on or near a boat in the water. To reduce the risk, use a marine carbon monoxide detector, ensure proper ventilation, seat children in the forward-most seating area of the boat, turn off the engine when not in use to avoid unnecessary idling and be aware of emissions from other boats. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, seek medical attention immediately.

WATCH YOUR CHILDREN

Always supervise children when they are in or near open water. Keep them within arm's reach and make sure they wear properly fitted life jackets at all times during water activities. Your vigilance helps ensure their safety.

For more water safety tips, visit www.PleaseWearIt.com and follow Please Wear It on **Facebook and Instagram**.

Butch Olofson Shooting Complex



The Butch Olofson Shooting Complex offers pistol, rifle, shotgun and archery opportunities. Additionally, a classroom is open to hunting and firearm education activities and a variety of audiences. We welcome shooters of all skill levels to hone their shooting skills either at our archery range, shotgun range (trap, skeet, or 5-stand), or at our 30-, 50- and 100-yard rifle/pistol ranges.

HOURS & COST:

The range is open winter hours, Nov. 1 through Feb. 28, Thursdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.; summer hours, March 1 through Oct. 31, Thursdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.; closed Monday through Wednesday. Last check-in time is 30 minutes before closing time.

The cost to use Olofson Shooting Complex are as follows: \$12/hour per individual, \$18/hour per family/couple, \$8/round for shotgun range, \$10/daily archery for individual, \$16/daily archery for family. Annual passes can be purchased at the range (are not required) at \$320 family annual membership, \$260 for an individual membership, or \$30 annual archery membership. Memberships are valid at Banner Shooting Range in Indianola. "Family" refers to significant others and children younger than age 18 living at home.

Olofson Shooting Complex is open year-round with a few closures during holidays and unsafe weather. Stay up to date with the latest information about upcoming classes, closures, events and general range updates at Butch Olofson Shooting Complex by following us on Facebook.



LOCATION AND CONTACT:

Butch Olofson Shooting Complex is located at 11652 N.W. Nissen Drive, Polk City, IA 50226. We are right around the corner from Big Creek State Park, just four miles north of Polk City. Our phone number is 515-795-4000, or email ranges@dnr.iowa.gov. Our website has been updated to list planned holiday closures and weather closure criteria/alerts. Check our website at www.iowadnr.gov/olofson, as well as our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/olofsonrange, for updates.

CLASSES AND EVENTS:

We offer classes throughout the year such as beginner level shooting, hunter education and learn to hunt classes. We also host Skeet and 5-Stand leagues during the spring and fall. These classes and events will be posted on our Facebook Page or on our registration site at: register-ed.com/programs/iowa.

**Learn more about Olofson Shooting
Range at iowadnr.gov/olofson**





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ON THE WAUKEE SIDE OF WEST DES MOINES

Big Creek



Park Office

8794 N.W. 125th Ave.
Polk City, Iowa 50226
515-984-6473
big_creek@dnr.iowa.gov

Big Creek Marina/Beach

8550 N.W. 142nd Ave.
Polk City, Iowa 50226
515-984-6083
bigcreekmarina.com

Facilities and activities

Big Creek Lake was created as part of the Saylorville project to protect Polk City from floods. A diversion dam, which forms the 866-acre Big Creek Lake, was primarily developed as a flood control project but also offers a wide variety of recreation. Big Creek State Park and the adjoining public hunting areas provide recreation for visitors of all ages and interests. The focal point of the 3,550-acre complex is the lake.

Picnicking/shelters

Shelters and picnic areas, a beach, playground and several boat ramps provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. Open picnic shelters, located in pleasant settings around the lake, can be reserved through the park reservation system. Shelters at the beach are handicap accessible.

Camping

Camping is not permitted at Big Creek State Park. However, there are several large federal and county camping areas about four miles away on Saylorville Lake.

Trails

A 26-mile paved multi-use trail allows bicyclists and pedestrians to travel from the beach south through the Saylorville Lake area all the way to Des Moines. A connection to the High Trestle Trail can be made by traveling east on 142nd Avenue for two miles. Eleven miles of snowmobile trails provide winter recreational opportunities. Big Creek is also popular with cross-country skiers.

Lake activities

(swimming, boating, fishing)

Big Creek Lake's clear water provides great family swimming fun. Refreshments are available at the beach during the swimming season. A large wooden play structure is located at the beach. Disc golf and volleyball areas provide additional entertainment.

Big Creek Lake provides excellent fishing year-round. The lake's clear waters are stocked with crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass, walleye, channel catfish and muskie. The lake is popular for a variety of boating activities. Any size motor may be operated

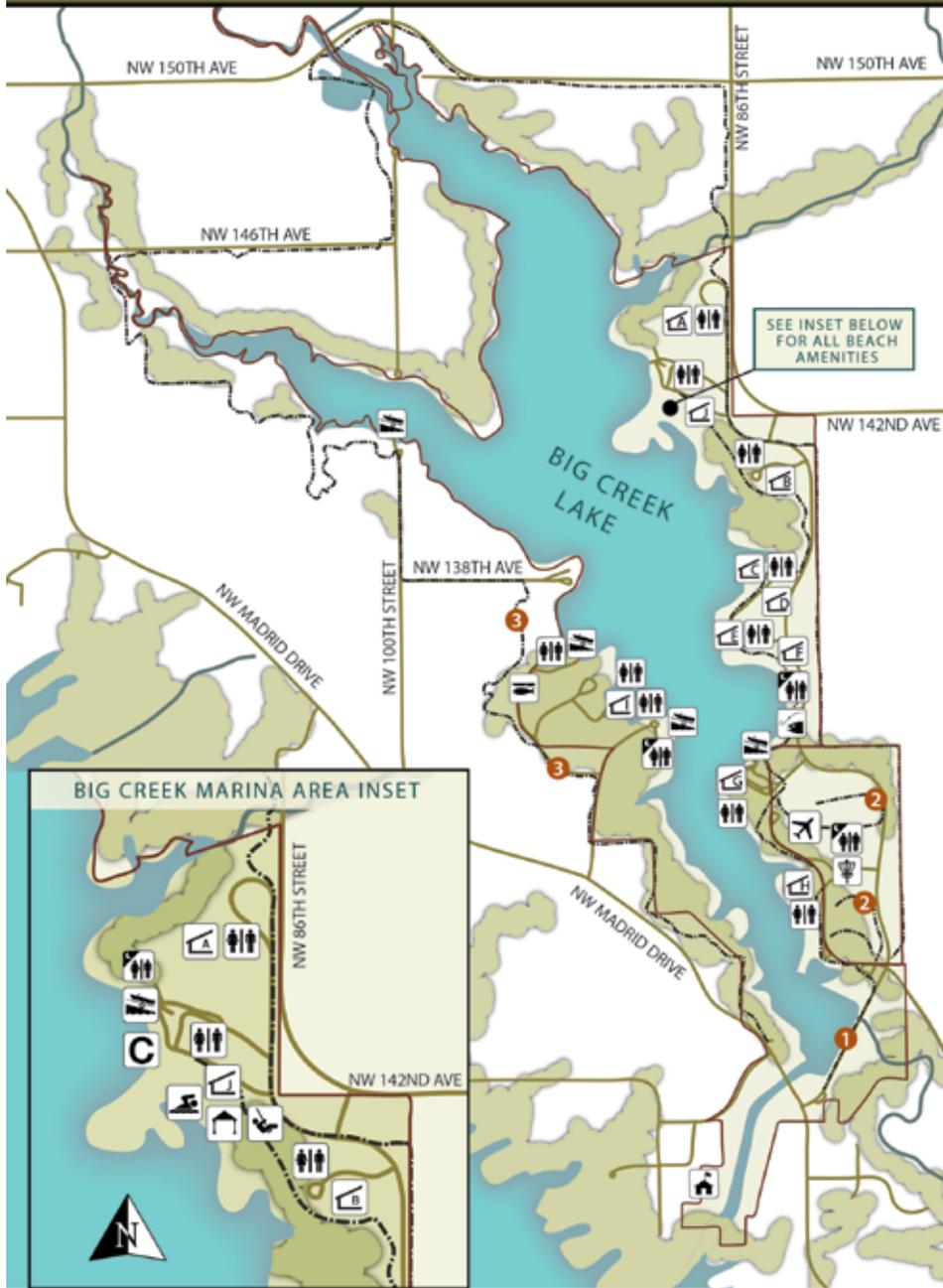
at "no wake" (5 mph or less) speeds on the lake. Five modern boat ramps, three on the west side and two on the east, provide excellent access to the lake. A gravel ramp is located on the upper end of the lake. A fishing pier is accessible to the mobility impaired. Big Creek has a concessionaire that offers pontoon boats, kayaks, paddle boards and more. To contact the concessionaire, call 515-984-6083 or visit their website at bigcreekmarina.com.

Hunting

The state park is a wildlife refuge where hunting is not permitted. However, hunting is allowed on the lake itself and in designated public hunting areas around the lake. Upland areas open for hunting are marked with public hunting signs. Favorite game includes pheasants, rabbit, deer and squirrel. Waterfowl hunting is popular on the lake. Information on hunting regulations can be found at: www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting.

Shelters

To reserve the shelters at the park, visit <https://iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com> or call 1-877-427-2757.



MAP KEY

- Beach Area
- Beach Cabanas - 9
- Boat Ramp
- Concession
- Disk Golf
- Fishing Pier / Jetty
- Fish Cleaning Station
- Park Office
- Playground
- Model Airfield
- Restroom - Modern Seasonal
- Restroom - Nonmodern Year-round
- Shelter

SHELTERS

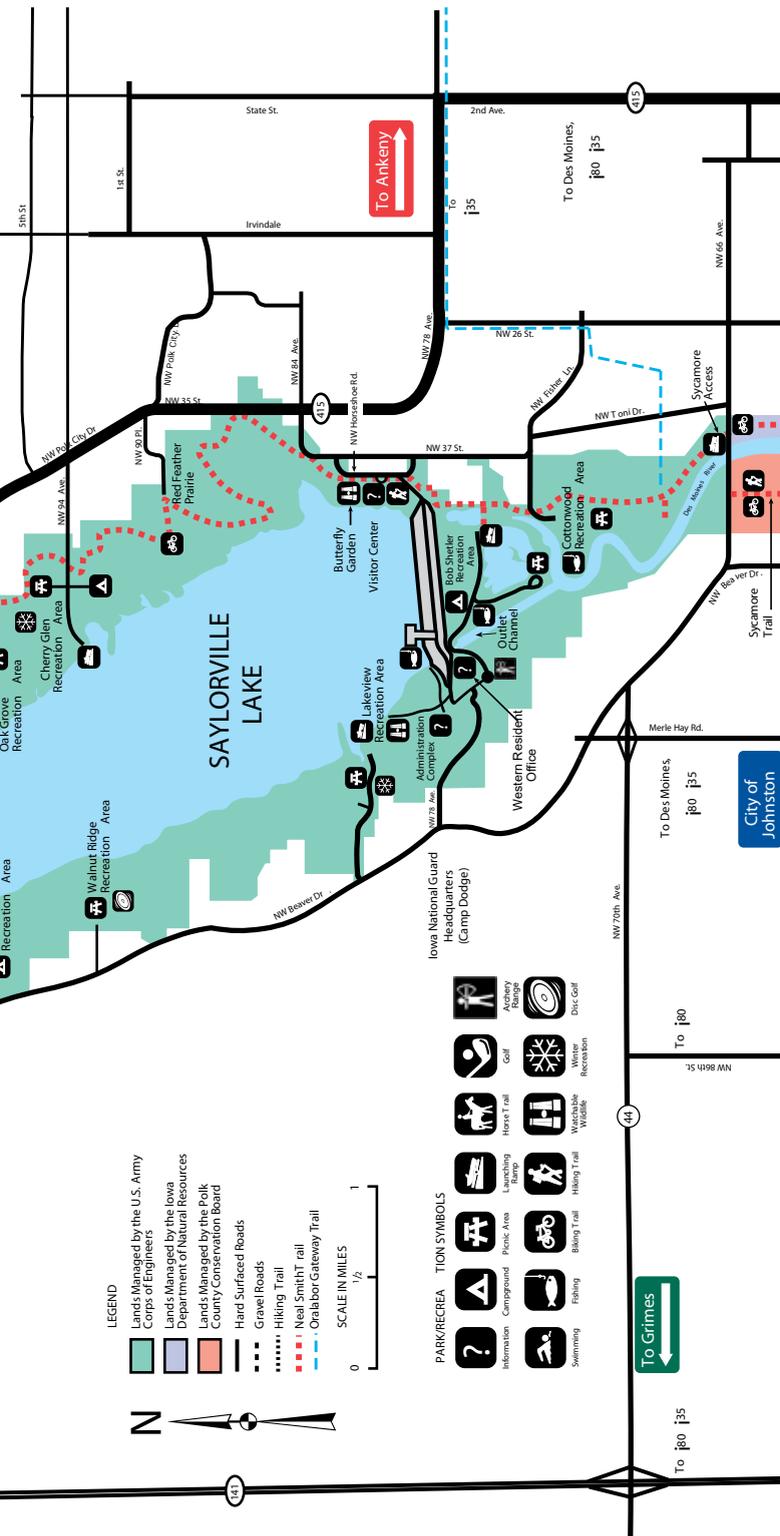
- A. Atlantic Shelter
- B. Beverly Dinghy Shelter
- C. Cadet Shelter
- D. Duster Shelter
- E. Ensign Shelter
- F. Firefly Shelter
- G. Gannet Shelter
- H. Hampton Shelter
- I. Inland Cat Shelter
- J. Beach Shelters 1,2,3

- Trail
- Road
- Park Boundary
- Multiuse Trails
- Water

TRAIL INFORMATION

Trail Name	Trail Activity	Length	Level of Difficulty	Estimated Hike Time
1 Neal Smith - Big Creek Portion	Hiking, Biking, Mountain Biking	3 mi	Easy	1.25-1.5 hr
2 Cross-country Ski	Cross-country Skiing	2.5 mi	Easy	1-1.25 hr
3 Snowmobile (Seasonal)	Snowmobiling	10.8 mi	Moderate	6 hr

Walking times are figured at a rate of 2 mph.
www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks



HOW TO CONTACT US

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Saylorville Lake
 5600 N.W. 78th Ave., Johnston, Iowa 50131
www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/SaylorvilleLake.aspx

Administration Office..... 515-276-4656
 Administration Fax..... 515-276-2088
 District Office, Rock Island 309-794-4200
 Park Rangers/Sheriff 515-286-3333
 Saylorville Lake Marina 515-984-6541
 Visitor Center/Park Information .. 515-964-0672
 Shelter and Campground Reservations
www.recreation.gov..... 877-444-6777

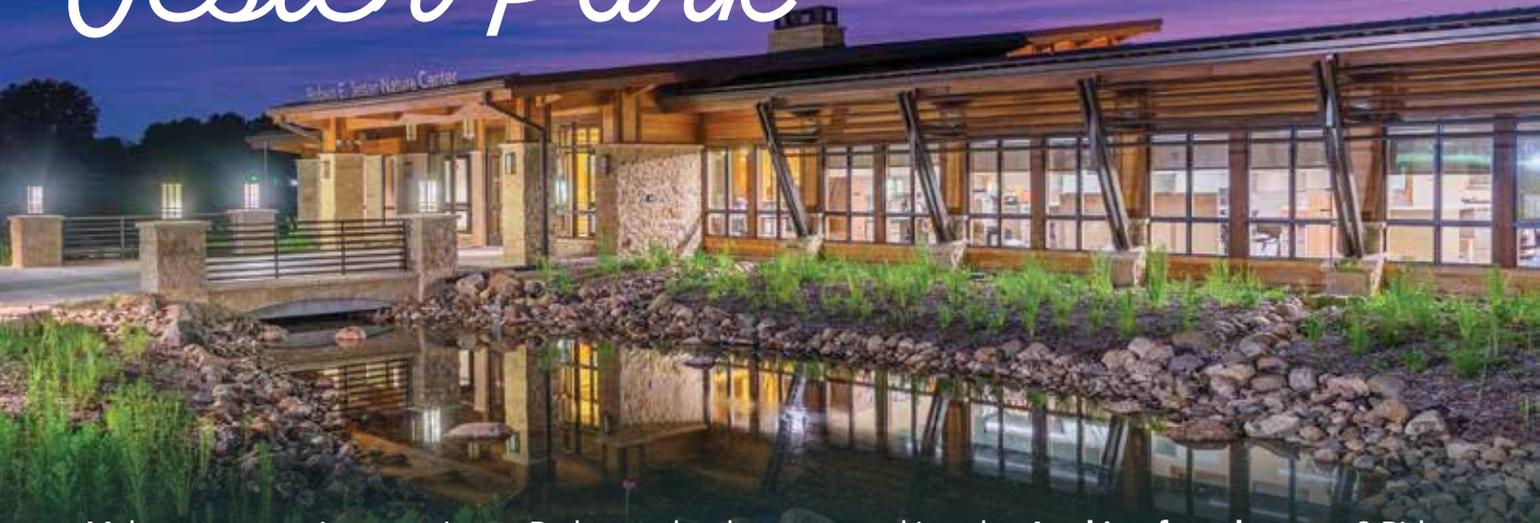
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Big Creek State Park • www.iowaDNR.gov
 8794 N.W. 125th Ave., Polk City, Iowa 50226
 State Park Beach Monitoring..... 515-725-3434
www.iowadnr.gov/things-to-do/beach-monitoring
 Big Creek State Park..... 515-984-6473
 Big Creek Boat & Bike Rental 515-984-6083
 Wallace Building..... 515-281-5918
 Conservation Officer
 Nate Anderson..... 515-238-4849
 Turn In Poachers (TIP)..... 800-532-2020
 Fishing Information 800-ASK-FISH
 Shelter Reservations 877-427-2757
iowastateparks.reserveamerica.com

Polk County Conservation at Jester Park

12130 N.W. 128th St., Granger, Iowa 50109
www.leadingyououtdoors.org
 Polk County Conservation 515-323-5300
 Jester Park - Weekend..... 515-249-3229
 Jester Park Equestrian Center..... 515-999-2818
 Jester Park Golf Course..... 515-999-2903
 Jester Park Nature Center..... 515-323-5350
 Outdoor Rec & Wellness Center... 515-323-5330

Jester Park



Make your experience at Jester Park exactly what you need it to be. **Looking for adventure?** Ride, hike, paddle or run here. **Want peace and quiet?** The park's chirping birds can be the only sound you hear for hours. **Seeking to reconnect with friends and family?** Jester Park has time and space for you to create memories with the people who matter most. **So, plan your visit already!**



Our Lady's Immaculate Heart

CATHOLIC CHURCH

MASS TIMES:

Saturday: 5pm
Sunday: 8:30 & 10:30am

Pray, Love & Serve Like Jesus



Fr. James Ahenkora
Pastor

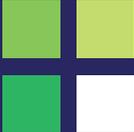


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Door Sizes:
12' W x 14' T



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**BOAT SMART
FROM THE START!**

Make sure your vessel has all required
safety equipment before heading to the water.



- At least 1 USCG approved life jacket for each person
- USCG approved throwable flotation device
- Type B fire extinguisher

- Sound-Producing device
- Working navigation lights
- Know the vessel's capacity limits
- Obey all buoy markings



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Rock Island District

www.facebook.com/SaylorvilleLake

www.pleasewearit.com



Learn from experts

You are never too old or young to feed your natural curiosity! Each year, a team of incredible naturalists leads hundreds of hikes, programs, workshops and classes. Visit LeadingYouOutdoors.org or scan the QR code to view the full calendar of events.



Jester Park Nature Center: Gateway to the outdoors

The nature center is part-classroom and part-community center, but 100% yours to enjoy! Read a book by the cozy fireplace of the great hall. Enjoy a picnic on the patio overlooking the prairie. Or, enrich your understanding of local ecosystems through the hands-on exhibits of wetlands, prairie and woodlands. Admission to the nature center is FREE. Stay as long as you please.

This space is welcoming to all! The west side of the nature center now features a sensory trail. The accessible feature is designed to help all engage with the natural world. Stop at interactive stations that ignite the senses. Smell the flowers, listen to the sounds, look for a variety of colors and touch the water, rocks and plants. In 2025 the Nature Center remodeled its restroom facilities to include a room that serves both nursing mothers and people seeking a respite from sensory overload. The Nature Center now also has a universal changing table.



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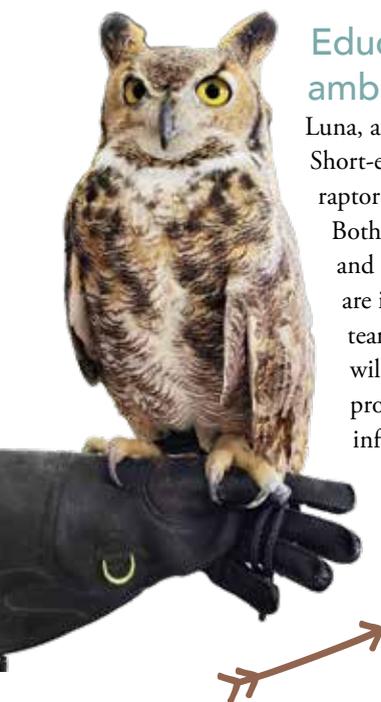
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Step back in time

The permanent Lithic and Historic Artifact Exhibit located inside the nature center honors the people and wildlife that inhabited this area thousands of years before Polk County Conservation became stewards of the land. See fossils, or stone and ceramic artifacts — all found on parkland.



Educational ambassadors

Luna, a Great Horned Owl and Indigo, a Short-eared Owl, reside at Jester Park in a raptor enclosure near the nature center.

Both raptors were rescued after injury and can no longer live in the wild. They are important partners to the naturalists, teaming up to educate on Iowa's wildlife through public and school programs. Call 515-323-5359 for more information.



Play, naturally

Watch as your child climbs, crawls, or wades through the Natural Playscape, enjoying each opportunity to investigate the natural world. Designed for ages 5-plus, the organic play area features boulders, earth mounds, logs and a bubbling rock waterfall. It is open mid-April through mid-October. While at the playscape, take a short walk to the nearby bison and elk exhibit. The small herd is a big hit with animal-lovers and history buffs!



Nature-inspired art

Experience art that educates, inspires, informs and arouses your curiosity in the natural world. The Galleries is located inside the nature center and features three different exhibitions each year. Alternatively, the Jester Park Sculpture Trail includes five permanent public works of art. Each sculpture is located along a beautiful loop trail that takes you past ponds and creeks and through timber and prairie alike.





Your recreation hub

The Jester Park Outdoor Recreation and Wellness Center, adjacent to the nature center, is the place to start when planning your next adventure. Want to climb? Practice your aim? Paddle? Ski? Hike? At this hub of activity, you can rent outdoor gear or equipment — including kayaks and cross-country skis. If you want a shaded experience, try the indoor target range or bouldering wall. Plus, it's a cool place to hang out on a laid-back afternoon. JesterParkNatureCenter.com has operating hours and rates.

Sleep under the stars

Set up camp at one of the park's nearly 150-plus campsites situated along the lakeshore and throughout the surrounding wooded hills. Whether you're camping in a tent or camper, Jester Park has a great mix of primitive and electric sites, as well as first-come, first-served or reservation-required sites. Rates run \$20-\$25 per night based on amenities. Make reservations at MyCountyParks.com for the camping season which runs April through October. When you're ready to build your campfire, wood is available for purchase on-site. S'mores, anyone?



Annual Events

Prairie Stomp Music Series

June 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

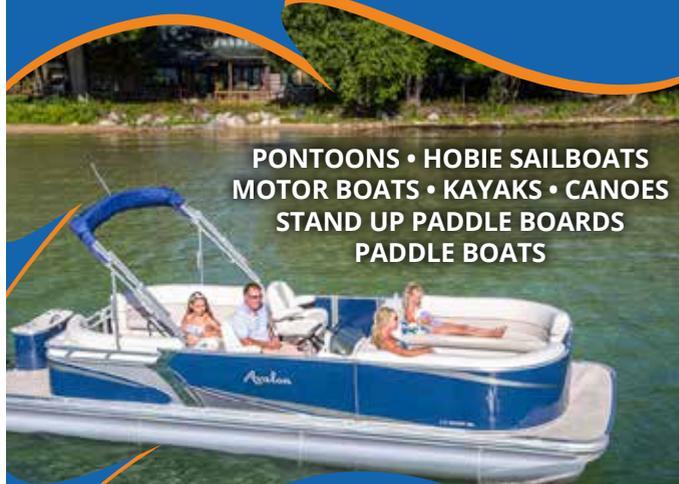
July 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Aug. 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Makers Market

Nov. 22, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Gathering space

Many family memories have been made under the sturdy pillars of a park shelter house! If you're a planner, reserve one of the four open-air shelters at MyCountyParks.com. These spaces are ideal for family outings or birthday parties. If you're more spontaneous, snag one of the many picnic tables and open grills that are scattered throughout the park.

Jester Park Equestrian Center

Nestled into the tree line along Saylorville Lake is a best-in-class arena, stable and barn complex. This is where horse-lovers of all ages and abilities can engage with a diverse herd which includes Percheron, Quarter Horse and a new set of Miniature Horses (to name a few). You can also participate in one of many educational programs or camps. Be sure to check out the seasonal trail or wagon rides. Visit JesterParkEC.com for more info.



Jester Park golf course and miniature golf course

Take a big swing or just putt-er around! The Jester Park Golf Course is a full golf complex offering an 18-hole championship course, 9-hole par 3 course, practice facility, 18-hole miniature golf course and full-service restaurant and bar. For rates or the restaurant menu, check out JesterParkGolf.com.

Walk in the wide-open

Exploring Jester Park's eight miles of hiking and multi-use trails is an adventure for your senses. Gaze at the native shagbark hickory and hackberry trees; take in the aromas and colors of spring wildflowers; or sing along with the black-capped chickadees and nuthatches. Horses and snowmobiles are invited to journey along the Lakeshore Trail only. Refer to the Jester Park map to view the trail system.





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WALNUT RIDGE RECREATION AREA

- Shelter
- Universally Accessible Restroom
- Parking
- Volunteer/Contractor Campsite
- Disk Golf Course

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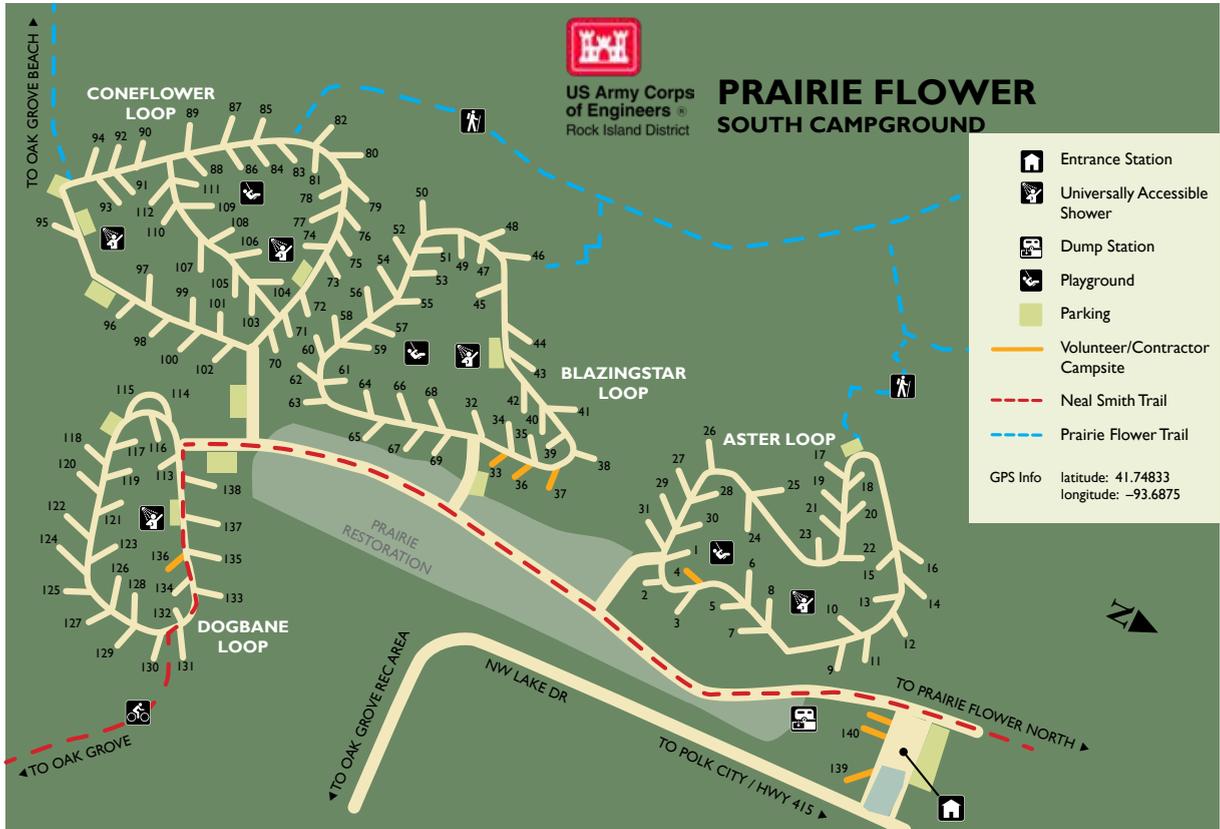
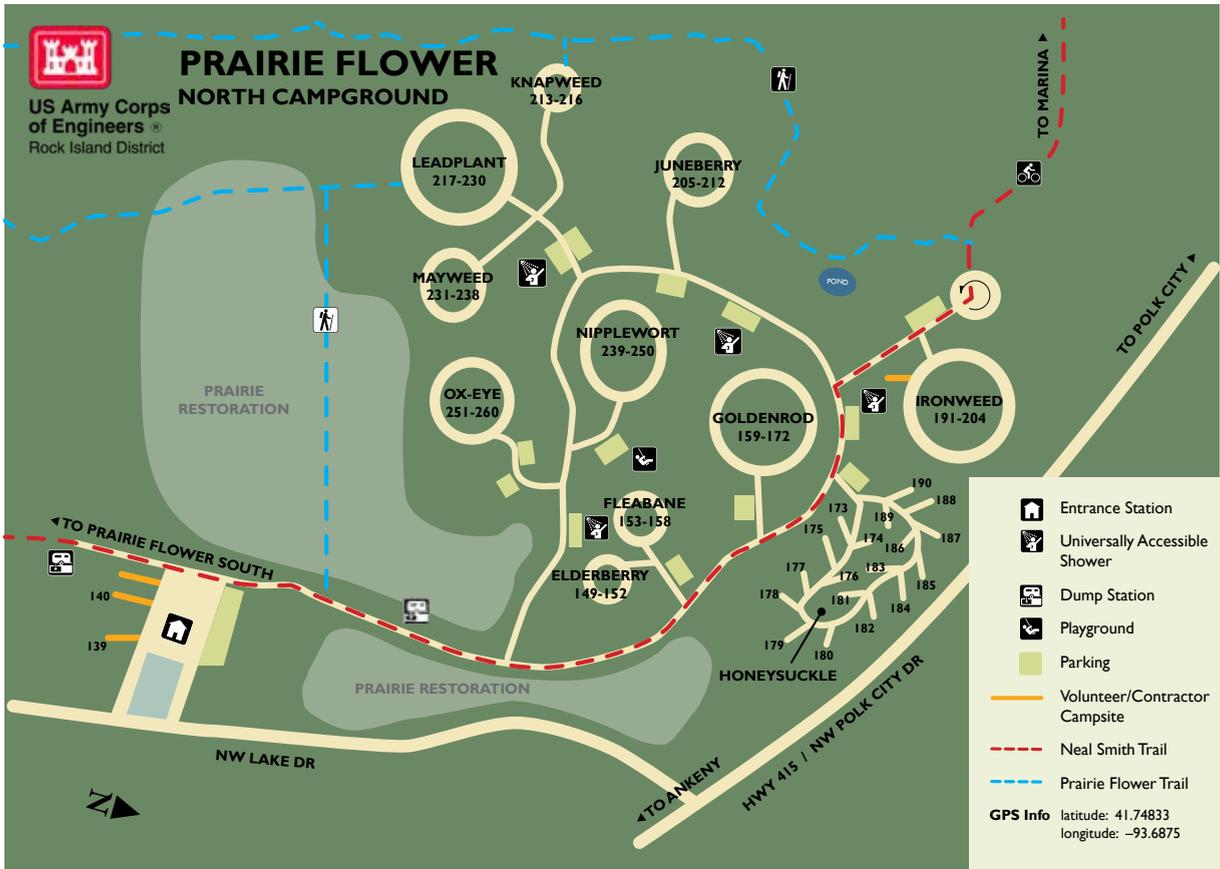
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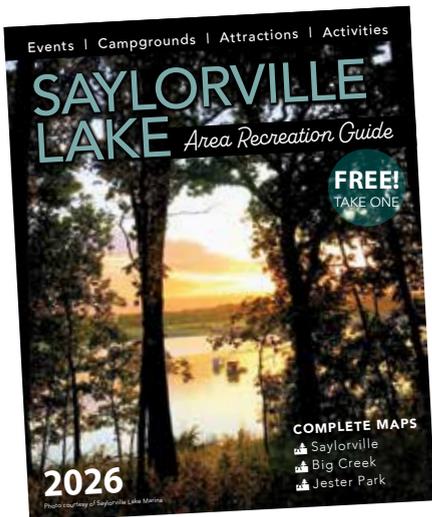
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- Sand Volleyball Court
- Playground
- Beach (No alcohol allowed)
- Windsurfing
- Parking
- Volunteer Campsite
- Neal Smith Trail
- Prairie Flower Trail

GPS Info latitude: 41.73889
longitude: -93.68472

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TO PRAIRIE FLOWER

NW 98th ST

TO BEACH (1/4 MILE)

TO HWY 415

TO PRAIRIE FLOWER

TO CHERRY GLEN



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SANDPIPER RECREATION AREA

SCENIC VIEWING AREA

POND

POND

NO WAKE ZONE

SAYLORVILLE LAKE

MARINA

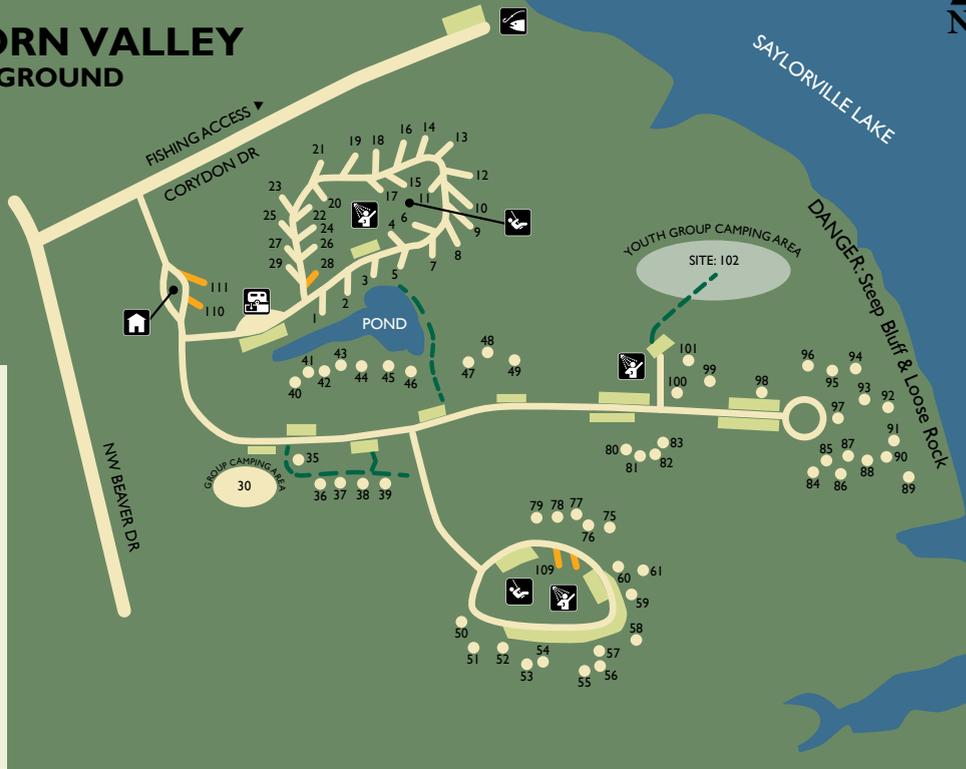
HWY 415 / NW POLK CITY DR

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 - Self-pay Station
 - Boat Ramp
 - Playground
 - Sand Volleyball Court
 - Baseball Field
 - Parking
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 - Neal Smith Trail
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longitude: -93.70972



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CHERRY GLEN RECREATION AREA



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 - Entrance Station
 - Self-pay Station
 - Universally Accessible Restroom
 - Universally Accessible Shower
 - Dump Station
 - Playground
 - Boat Ramp
 - Jet Ski Launch
 - Sledding
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